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Author(s): Cristina Pino

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THE MARKET SCENE IN THE TOMB OF KHAEMHAT

(TT 57)

By CRISTINA PINO

The tomb of Khaemhat (TT 57) is renowned for the exceptional quality of its reliefs, as well as for the historical importance contained in the representations and texts describing the king's *Sed* Festival. The numerous scenes depicting agricultural tasks that decorate the tomb are related to Khaemhat's main function, namely the control of agricultural production and subsequent storage for distribution. On the wall adjacent to the one showing the harvest there is a scene representing a market, an unusual subject in New Kingdom tombs, though more frequent in Old Kingdom mastabas. At Thebes, markets only appear certainly in the tombs of Kenamon (TT 162), Ipuv (TT 217) and Huy and Kenro (TT 54). Even if there are some similarities in all these representations, that of Khaemhat has several peculiarities that make it unique and which may well reveal new information about commerce in ancient Egypt.

TT 57 and its market scene

KHAEMHAT, also named Mahu, was Overseer of the granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt during the reign of Amenhotep III. His tomb in Qurna (TT 57) was decorated in a delicate low relief which, according to Cyril Aldred, 'represents the high-water mark of the art of the Eighteenth Dynasty'.¹ The plan of TT 57 is traditionally T-shaped, although exceptionally irregular. The commonest decorative themes are those related to management of agricultural production, the core of Khaemhat's activity. This theme appears on the east and west walls of the transverse hall. Additionally, the tomb-owner's relationship with King Amenhotep III and the *Heb-Sed* celebration is also emphasized. Funerary rites are prominent in the longitudinal hall. On the east wall of the transverse hall, adjoining the corner with the south wall where the statues are, there is a scene representing a market,² an uncommon subject in New Kingdom tombs, although not infrequent in Old Kingdom mastabas. Such examples may be found in the tombs of Ti, Tepemankh, Kagemni, Niankhkhnum and Khnumhotep, and Ankhmahor, all of them in the Saqqara necropolis, and one other on the wall of the causeway of Unas.

Market scenes in New Kingdom Theban tombs

Of all Eighteenth and Nineteenth Dynasty Theban tombs, leaving aside that of Khaemhat, market scenes are only represented in those belonging to Kenamon (TT 162), Ipuv (TT 217), Huy and Kenro (TT 54) and TT A4, although doubtful in the last. In the tomb of Kenamon,³ Mayor of Thebes and Overseer of the granaries of Amon, who also served Amenhotep III, the details of the scene illustrate international as well as local trade in the way that it would have taken place during the New Kingdom. The episode depicts how Syrian merchants transport goods in ships for trading in Egypt, whose freight is then unloaded by several men. The representation of the dock where the ships are moored is divided into three registers where local commerce is illustrated. Men and women are sitting in stalls covered by awnings; they either sell commodities, such as clothing and sandals, or weigh products. A Syrian man is bargaining with one of the shopkeepers.

¹ *New Kingdom Art in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1961), 69.

² PM I, 1, 115 (9).

³ PM I, 1, 275 (1); N. de G. Davies and R. O. Faulkner, 'A Syrian Trade Venture to Egypt', *JEA* 33 (1947), 40–6.

As for the market depicted in the tomb of Ipu⁴, who was a draftsman from Deir el-Medina in the time of Ramses II, we see a place where women, seated in their stalls, are bartering. They form two different groups on each side of a ship; on the left, one of the women is exchanging bread and wine for the cereals contained in a sack that a man is giving to her, while the other one is bartering fish for grain, which another man tips into her basket. On the right side, two women are also exchanging bread for grain. All the men in the scene come from the ship moored in the centre and, according to Eyre,⁵ the grain may be the allotment for their work.

TT 54⁶ had two owners. The first one is Huy, Sculptor of Amon, who probably built it during the reign of Thutmose IV; in the early Nineteenth Dynasty it was usurped by Kenro, Priest and Head of the magazine of Khonsu, who commissioned the market scene.⁷ There are evident similarities between the depiction of trading activity in this tomb and on the left side in that of Ipu: women here are also selling and are sitting on the ground in front of the goods they offer, although in this case their customers are peasants. However, in TT 54 this scene does not show the river which appears in tombs 217, 57 and 162. The woman and man on the left seem to be exchanging some kind of herb or vegetable for some commodity a labourer carries in a basket. The woman on the right is offering a bowl which appears to contain eggs. A man seated on the far left seems also to be offering his wares to possible buyers.

The owner of TT A4, according to Manniche,⁸ is *Wnsw*, Scribe and Counter of grain under Thutmose III, but according to Porter and Moss⁹ he is Sauser, Scribe, Counter of grain, Mayor of the Southern City and Overseer of the granary in the Eighteenth Dynasty. The scene¹⁰ depicts in three damaged registers a joyful event in Thebes, maybe the arrival of the royal expedition from Kush cited in the texts. Just as seen in the tombs mentioned above, women play a leading role in the current activity. The goods mentioned and illustrated are mainly foodstuffs, such as meat, fish, fowl, vegetables or figs, and also ointments.

Although Porter and Moss as well as Manniche recognize this depiction in TT A4 as a market or barter scene, there are some details to be considered in order to verify its actual nature. To begin with, in TT 162, TT 217, TT 54 and TT 57, the vendors are sitting or crouching while meeting possible buyers. However, in the TT A4 scene, nobody adopts this posture and neither stalls nor booths are used, as is the case in Ipu and Kenamon. Next, the numerous women in both upper and middle registers form standing groups; some are waiting their turn under the control of a man with a stick, while others are just taking food products or going away bearing different products. As a result, this scene looks more likely to represent an allotment of goods provided by the king, and so the presence of both the 'Mayor of the Southern City, Overseer of the granary...Sauser'¹¹ and the 'Inspector and scribe of the Southern City, Pakedu'¹² would be comprehensible since they are supervising a royal favour.

Markets in tombs 162, 217 and 54 are different. In Kenamon's scene, the stalls seem to be long-established, professional stands supplied with scales and all kinds of commerce implements. However, sellers in Ipu and Kenro's scenes are trading for simple family maintenance.¹³

⁴ PM I, 1, 316 (5, III); N. de G. Davies, *Two Ramesside Tombs at Thebes* (New York, 1937), pl. 30.

⁵ C. Eyre, 'The Market Women of Pharaonic Egypt', in N. Grimal and B. Menu (eds), *Le commerce en Egypte ancienne* (BdE 12; Cairo, 1998), 176.

⁶ PM I, 1, 104–5.

⁷ M. M. Abdul-Qader, *The Development of the Funerary Beliefs and Practices Displayed in the Private Tombs of the New Kingdom at Thebes* (Cairo, 1966), pl. 43; PM I, 1, 105 (5, III).

⁸ L. Manniche, *Lost Tombs. A Study of Certain Eighteenth Dynasty Monuments in the Theban Necropolis* (London and New York, 1988), 62–87.

⁹ PM I, 1, 448–9.

¹⁰ Manniche, *Lost Tombs*, 66–7, pl. 7; PM I, 1, 449 (III).

¹¹ Manniche, *Lost Tombs*, 67.

¹² Manniche, *Lost Tombs*, 66.

¹³ B. J. Kemp, *Ancient Egypt. Anatomy of a Civilization* (London and New York, 1989), 225.

The fleet in Khaemhat's market scene

In Khaemhat's tomb, the market scene¹⁴ develops in two large registers where some ships are being loaded (figs. 1–3). In the upper one, which is severely damaged, there are 21 vessels with folded sails (fig. 1). On the shore, some crew-members are engaged in vessel upkeep, and an overseer is beating a subordinate¹⁵ while other sailors proceed to disembark goods carried on their heads. In the lower register (fig. 2), there are twenty ships with hoisted sails. On the left a woman seems to be saying goodbye to a sailor while other members of the crew are descending a ramp loading bundles, also on their heads.¹⁶ Vessels have high masts ending in a banner, and a big oar which has a pharaoh's head with uraeus decorating the handle end. Their bows are adorned with heads of cattle.

Ship arrangements and the form of the masts resemble strongly those found in two Amarna tombs: Meryra (Number 4)¹⁷ and Penthu (Number 5).¹⁸ In both scenes, Akhenaton is rewarding his server in a place that seems to be a royal estate. In Meryra's tomb, the event takes place 'between the gate of the grain-store and the banks of the river'.¹⁹ There are several vessels moored with their crew bowing before the king.

In Khaemhat's tomb additionally a couple of huge geese—the most characteristic big bird in Nubia—are flying to the left of the ships. Vandier²⁰ considers these to be the symbol of the conclusion of a happy journey.

The Nubian sellers

The market scene proper in TT 57 (fig. 1) is situated to the right of the ships and develops into three very short registers, the central one unfortunately largely destroyed. In all three registers, the buyers are Egyptians from the vessels. Only the sellers in the upper and lower registers are preserved and both have manifest negroid features, adorning their heads with hats garlanded with flowers and short feathers (fig. 3). They are unlike the usual representations of Nubians during the New Kingdom, not so much because of their features but for their head ornaments.²¹

Depictions of Nubians in Egyptian art during the Old and Middle Kingdoms, when close relations between Nubia and Egypt were still limited to the area below the Third Cataract, are scarce. Nubians are represented as dark-brown skinned, sometimes black, curly-haired people who wore distinctive clothes but in most cases had Egyptian features.²² During the New Kingdom, Egypt extended its dominion upstream to the Fourth Cataract. A new Nubian type appeared in artwork then with characteristics typical of Southern Africa: black skin, prominent lips and a steep jaw. In all cases these people are called Nubians, which did not necessarily denote an ethnic or linguistic concept, but a geographical one.²³

¹⁴ W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altägyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Geneva, 1988), 199–200.

¹⁵ This detail is partially lost. We know it thanks to Lepsius' drawing in Wreszinski, *Atlas*, 199.

¹⁶ Feminine presence in a merchant vessel also occurs in Neferhotep's tomb (TT 49), where a woman is apparently mending a sail: see N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Nefer-hotep at Thebes* (PMMA 9; New York, 1933), pls. xlii–xliii.

¹⁷ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, I. *The Tomb of Meryra* (ASE 13; London, 1903), pl. xxix.

¹⁸ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, IV. *The Tombs of Penthu, Mahu and Others* (ASE 16; London, 1906), pl. viii.

¹⁹ Davies, *El Amarna* IV, 34.

²⁰ J. Vandier, *Manuel d'archéologie égyptienne*, V. *Bas-*

reliefs et peintures. Scènes de la vie quotidienne (Paris, 1969), 934–6.

²¹ Lepsius' drawing in Wreszinski, *Atlas*, 199 is inaccurate, as he does not depict the sellers' negroid features. Vandier, who surely could have seen this scene only in Lepsius' depiction, affirms they are people from Punt: see Vandier, *Manuel* V, 935.

²² Only curly hair and prominent lips denote a Nubian origin, as happens in a Twelfth Dynasty Metropolitan Museum fragment from Lisht (number 13.235.4); see *Nubia. Los Reinos del Nilo en Sudán* (Catalogue of an exhibition in Barcelona and Madrid; Barcelona, 2003), 118.

²³ B. Trigger, *Africa in Antiquity. The Arts of Ancient Nubia and the Sudan*, I. *The Essays* (Catalogue of an exhibition in Brooklyn Museum; New York, 1978), 29.



FIG. 1. Tomb of Khaemhat (TT 57). Market scene. East wall of transverse hall (photograph Antonio Lobo).



FIG. 2. Tomb of Khaemhat (TT 57). Market scene. Ships and sailors (photograph Thierry Benderitter).



FIG. 3. Tomb of Khaemhat (TT 57). Market scene. Nubians and Egyptians bartering, upper register (author's photograph).

All through the Eighteenth Dynasty, Theban tombs experienced an apparent evolution in Nubian types and the roles they played. During the reigns of Hatshepsut and Thutmose III they are, for the most part, prisoners or tribute bearers, although sometimes they are also labourers, as in Rekhmire's tomb (TT 100),²⁴ where they are shown making mud-bricks. During the period of Thutmose IV, Nubians, in addition to being tribute bearers, are featured as soldiers. This activity is present in two warrior burials, those of Horemheb (TT 78)²⁵ and Tjanuny (TT 74).²⁶ In Amenhotep IV's early reign they appear for the first time as delegates; this is the case on the unfinished wall decorated in Amarna style in Ramose's tomb (TT 55).²⁷ The greatest differences in categories and attitudes regarding Nubians occur in the tomb of the Viceroy of Kush Amenhotep, called Huy (TT 40),²⁸ from the reign of Tutankhamon, where there are a princess, slaves, soldiers and nobles.

Although during the Eighteenth Dynasty Nubians' features change as style evolves towards freer forms, in private Theban tombs they appear as slender people,²⁹ with a

²⁴ N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-rê at Thebes* (PMMA 11; New York, 1943), pl. lv.

²⁵ A. Brack and A. Brack, *Das Grab des Haremheb. Theben Nr. 78* (AV 35; Mainz, 1980), pls. 30, 31 a, 47 a-b.

²⁶ A. Brack and A. Brack, *Das Grab des Tjanuni. Theben Nr. 74* (AV 19; Mainz, 1977), pl. 28 a.

²⁷ N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of the Vizier Ramose* (New York, 1941), pl. xxxv.

²⁸ Nina de G. Davies and A. Gardiner, *The Tomb of Huy, Viceroy of Nubia in the Reign of Tut'ankhamün* (No.40) (Theban Tomb Series 4; London, 1926), pls. x, xvi-xviii, xxiii-xxiv, xxvii-xxx.

²⁹ Except for the group of soldiers bearing a standard in Thununy's tomb who look well fed: A. Mekhitarian, *La peinture égyptienne* (Geneva, 1978), 97.

different skin tone, adorned with high feathers when they are soldiers, and dressed in the Egyptian fashion when they are nobles. Their facial features are negroid in most cases.³⁰ However, Theban private tombs do not feature the contemptuous element, almost caricaturing and disparaging, reserved for Nubians in works extolling royalty dating from the beginning of the Eighteenth Dynasty onwards,³¹ and which will become the trend followed in the Memphite tomb of Horemheb.³²

Africans in Khaemhat's burial place have no equivalent in any other representation in Theban necropolis. They are like neither the earlier, contemporary or posterior negroid types, nor like the Nubians represented in Horemheb's tomb in Saqqara. These depictions lack contempt towards a defeated enemy; on the contrary, they aspire to represent the racial features and adornments of a tropical African people as accurately as possible. In the upper register, Nubians are standing, but they bow their bodies in order to appear the same height as Egyptians. In the lower one, they stay sitting and are as high as the sailors, which denotes their size. This characteristic is confirmed by the great size of their heads compared with those of the Egyptians (fig. 3). The different size dimension between Nubian and Egyptian figures in this scene can be found too in some other depictions from the tomb of Horemheb in Saqqara. This is particularly evident in the second court, east wall, south side, where the Egyptian soldiers who carry Nubian captives before their General are significantly smaller than their prisoners.³³ The same applies to fragment KS 1869 = 1887 in the Museum of Bologna,³⁴ where sitting black men reach their Egyptian guards' waists. In both cases, the dissimilarity of head sizes is significant, being bigger among the Nubians.

These size differences are contrary to Egyptian iconographic tradition, where the largest figure is the most important one, and may be understood either as a symbol of Egyptian power and supremacy³⁵ or else as an attempt to create dramatic conflict.³⁶ However, these interpretations do not explain Khaemhat's scene where no demonstration of force is represented, but a mere communication between buyers and sellers.

Amarna private tombs frequently feature depictions of Nubians. They play the same roles as they do in Thebes: tribute bearers, soldiers and delegates.³⁷ Their clothing, hairstyle and heads adorned with long feathers are their distinctive attributes. Some of these Amarna Nubians, particularly the soldiers, show intense features without contemptuous treatment, as occurs in Khaemhat's tomb. This is the case with the warriors before the royal couple and the standard-bearers who receive them in the temple shown in the tomb of Meryra (Number 4).³⁸ Fragments from Amarna Period buildings now kept in the Brooklyn Museum, one from Karnak and another one from Sesebi, with two warrior Nubians³⁹ also share the same realistic aim to depict facial features with no denigrating purpose.

³⁰ An interesting case is Maiherpri (KV 36), Fan-bearer on the right of the King and Child of the Nursery. In the depictions in his Book of the Dead, his skin is black and his hair curled, but his features are Egyptian. Morkot, in *Nubia. Los Reinos del Nilo en Sudán*, 53, considers Maiherpri a Nubian prince educated in Egypt.

³¹ A significant example of this trend is the relief from Amenhotep III's mortuary temple in the Cairo Museum (CG 34026), where the king carries Nubian prisoners in his horse-drawn carriage.

³² G. T. Martin, *The Memphite Tomb of Horemheb, Commander in Chief of Tut'ankhamun*, I (EES Excavation Memoirs 55; London, 1989), pls. 82–4, 89–91; G. T. Martin, *The Hidden Tombs of Memphis* (London, 1991), ills. 32, 35, 37–8, 40–2.

³³ Martin, *Hidden Tombs*, ills. 31–2, 40–1.

³⁴ *La collezione egiziana. Museo Civico Archeologico di Bologna* (Bologna, 1994), 32.

³⁵ Martin, *Hidden Tombs*, 72.

³⁶ B. Lesko, 'True Art in Ancient Egypt', in H. Lesko (ed.), *Egyptological Studies in Honor of Richard A. Parker. Presented on the Occasion of his 78th Birthday, December 10, 1983* (Hannover and London, 1986), 86–7.

³⁷ A good example of all those Nubian types is on the west wall of Huya's tomb (Number 1); see N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, III. *The Tombs of Huya and Ahmes* (ASE 15; London, 1905), pls. xiv–xv.

³⁸ Davies, *El Amarna* I, pls. x, xiii.

³⁹ Brooklyn Museum 37.413; see E. Riefstahl, 'A Wounded Warrior', *Bulletin. The Brooklyn Museum* 17/4 (1956), 2–6.

Khaemhat's market, commerce in ancient Egypt and Egyptian colonization in Nubia

In Khaemhat's market, the sailors who have just left the vessel negotiate animatedly with the black men before their stalls on the shore, one of them also taking part in negotiations from the ship's bow. Egyptian and Nubian arms interweave, and they appear either to be haggling over the price or to be having problems understanding each other. It is difficult to determine accurately the supplies offered for sale by the Nubian men, but they seem to be food. Texts in the scene in TT A4 can provide a clue about the merchandise coming from Nubia, since there is a reference in the upper register: 'Taking many sycomore figs to the people of Thebes out of the best of the goods from vile Kush which His Majesty brought from...'⁴⁰ In the middle register we can read: 'Meat, fowl, fish, all kinds of sweet herbs, ointment of moringa oil, unguent of myrrh'.⁴¹

In addition, Nubians cultivated dates,⁴² and they were also beekeepers and wine producers, this being the commodity traded in the middle register of TT 57, unfortunately the most damaged, where some jars are resting upon the traditional stand, just as can be seen in Ipu's tomb. Egyptians in the upper and lower registers carry sacks upon their shoulders, whereas the ones in the middle register bear vessels. All of them carry commodities to be traded with local merchants.

Khaemhat's market has some aspects in common with those of Ipu and Kenamon: the location on a shore and the barter between sellers placed on the water's edge and the sailors coming from ships. Eyre⁴³ emphasizes the importance of sailors in local trade in ancient Egypt as agents of commodity exchange of items such as fish or grain, essential for the subsistence of the population of small communities. Therefore, they were the means used by peasants and artisans in such villages for selling their farming and workshop products. This is the case of the markets depicted in the tombs of Ipu, Kenro and Khaemhat, where sellers are not professionals but villagers and housewives who barter their garden foodstuffs for other goods they do not generate. Local commerce includes bartering between private individuals for family unit supply. However, Khaemhat's market is unique because of the presence of Nubian men.

The scene as a whole reflects river transport related to Nubia and its connotations in ancient Egypt. According to Janssen,⁴⁴ this type of transport was part of Egyptian economic structure during the New Kingdom, due to the fact that domestic economy could not be wholly self-dependent. In this way, judging from the Deir el-Medina ostraca, it appears that its inhabitants made a living not only from the rations supplied by the state but also from barter.

Ships' logs from Ramesside times identify a large amount of foodstuffs within the freight ships that supplied villages; some of these goods were perishable, which means that transport ought to have been rapid⁴⁵ since they were vital for the daily maintenance of dwellers in Egypt. The exchange place was called *mryt*, which means riverbank and also dock, because this too was the location reserved for cargo disembarkation.⁴⁶

Fleets were composed of large freight ships, *wsh*. Their owners might have been either temples or private persons. In Khaemhat's scene, the fleet looks as if it is the property of the

⁴⁰ Manniche, *Lost Tombs*, 66.

⁴¹ Manniche, *Lost Tombs*, 66.

⁴² This crop is depicted in Prince Djehutyhotep's tomb in Debeira West; see T. Säve-Söderbergh, 'Teh-khet. The Cultural and Socio-political Structure of a Nubian Princedom in Thutmoside Times', in W. V. Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa. Nubia from Prehistory to Islam* (London, 1993), 187 and fig. 2.

⁴³ Eyre, in Grimal and Menu (eds), *Le commerce en Égypte ancienne*, 183.

⁴⁴ J. J. Janssen, *Two Ancient Egyptian Ship's Logs. Papyrus Leiden I 350 Verso and Papyrus Turin 2008+2016* (Leiden, 1961), 99.

⁴⁵ According to Degas' estimate, New Kingdom ships travelled about 60 km per 12 hour day, approximately 5 km per hour; see J. Degas, 'Navigation sur le Nil au Nouvel Empire', in B. Menu (ed.), *Les problèmes institutionnels de l'eau* (BdE 110; Cairo, 1994), 143.

⁴⁶ J. Černý, *A Community of Workmen at Thebes in the Ramesside Period* (Cairo, 1973), 94.

monarchy.⁴⁷ The ships' adornments are similar to those featured in royal vessels in Amarna tombs, as we have seen before: large oars whose handle end is a pharaoh's head with uraeus, the bows decorated with cattle heads and high masts ending in a banner. Moreover, so many ships in two registers is only possible in a large scale expedition sponsored by the sovereign. As for the place where vessels are moored, it is almost certainly Nubia, and more specifically Kush, a conclusion drawn from the negroid features and the distinctive garments that lack any Egyptian influence.

Egypt established in Nubia a colonial administration based on exploitation of natural resources, especially gold. Nubian wealth included many other luxury products such as ivory, ebony, ostrich feathers and eggs, fragrant gum resins, semiprecious stones and leopard skins, goods that are depicted in some Theban tombs carried by Nubians and called *inw* by Egyptians, a word conventionally translated as 'taxes'. However, in Morkot's opinion, *inw* implies a more complex social and economic relationship that involves a mutual obligation, which meant that the Egyptian king 'awarded gifts to Kushite rulers in return'.⁴⁸ Although Nubian agricultural productivity increased during the New Kingdom thanks to basin improvements,⁴⁹ grain was scarce and it was probably an important component of this traffic with Egypt in exchange for luxury goods, and also as payment for Egyptians who worked in Nubia.

The temple town, a complex integrated by the temple and its supplementary buildings but also by authorities' residences, houses and extra-mural settlements, became the focal centre and chief method of Egyptian colonization in Kush.⁵⁰ As Geus points out, 'temple towns (in Nubia) acted as an economic and/or administrative network and as the markers of Egypt's sovereignty'.⁵¹ Amenhotep III's building activity in Nubia focused in the area south of the Second Cataract. There, on the river's western bank, he founded two new temple towns, Soleb and Sedeinga. The first one was dedicated to the cult of the King and the second to the Great Royal Wife Tiyi. Political interest in emphasizing Egyptian power in the region seems to have been the reason for these settlements,⁵² but economic activity was also important, especially that of gold panning, rather than agriculture, since the sites are not particularly wealthy in this aspect.⁵³

Scene interpretation

Due to the lack of texts that could explain this depiction, iconographic analysis is the only method of elucidating this scene. It seems to illustrate a royal fleet disembarking in an Egyptian colony in Upper Nubia, dispatched for the purpose of exchanging grain provisions for luxury commodities or for paying officials labouring in Kush. Ship crews repair damages or unload merchandise and, as illustrated in Ipu's tomb, change their rations for foodstuff offered by Nubians in improvised stalls situated by the riverside. Therefore, as in Kenamon's scene, we can observe two different kinds of trade: official and private.

⁴⁷ As texts in TT A4 reveal, royal expeditions were also arranged for commodity exchange.

⁴⁸ R. G. Morkot, 'Nubia in the New Kingdom: the Limits of Egyptian Control', in Davies (ed.), *Egypt and Africa*, 299–300. See also B. J. Kemp, 'Imperialism and Empire in New Kingdom Egypt (c. 1575–1087 B.C.)', in P. D. A. Garnsey and C. R. Whittaker (eds), *Imperialism in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1978), 28.

⁴⁹ B. Trigger, *Nubia under the Pharaohs* (London, 1976), 130.

⁵⁰ Kemp, in Garnsey and Whittaker (eds), *Imperialism*, 23.

⁵¹ F. Geus, 'The Middle Nile Valley from Later Prehistory to the End of the New Kingdom', paper presented at the Tenth International Conference of the International Society for Nubian Studies, held in Rome, September 9–14, 2002. Internet page: <http://rmcisadu.let.uniroma1.it/nubiaconference/geus.doc>, 12. See also B. J. Kemp, 'Temple and Town in Ancient Egypt', in J. Ucko, R. Tringham and G. W. Dimbleby (eds), *Man, Settlement and Urbanism* (London, 1972), 667.

⁵² H. Goedicke, *Problems Concerning Amenophis III* (Baltimore, 1992), 48.

⁵³ Trigger, *Nubia*, 128.



FIG. 4. Tomb of Khaemhat (TT 57). Scene next to market: harvest inspection and offering to Renenutet (photograph Thierry Benderitter).

On the whole, scenes in Egyptian private tombs do not depict unique events, but generic activities, and their purpose is to guarantee eternal life for the deceased. They appear grouped into thematic cycles not necessarily following a canonical sequence.⁵⁴ Khaemhat's market scene is now somewhat isolated since the decoration of the upper and lower parts has not survived. The scene next to it (fig. 4) depicts the harvest inspection and the offering to the serpent-headed goddess Renenutet nourishing a royal child. Of all the four tombs with market scenes, three of them (Huy and Kenro, Ipu and Khaemhat)⁵⁵ have some relationship to Renenutet, goddess of granaries and harvests. The reason this sequence may lie in the shared purpose of agricultural crop bartering and the role of the goddess, who is not present in Kenamon's tomb—the only one not to illustrate grain commerce. Nevertheless, in Khaemhat's chapel the scene topic is directly linked to the tomb owner's rank as Overseer of the granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt. His office hinged directly on the king and he was in charge of the national granary. His main duties were those of the control of harvests as well as distribution of cereal grains.⁵⁶

Style

TT 57 dates from the last decade of the reign of Amenhotep III, a period of some creative freedom and a certain realism that can be observed in a number of royal statues representing

⁵⁴ M. Müller, 'Iconography: Basic Problems of the Classification of Scenes', in *Atti del Sesto Congresso Internazionale di Egittologia* (Turin, 1993), I, 338–9.

⁵⁵ They are situated as follows: TT 57: contiguous scene, left, PM I, 1, 114 (8, I, II, sub-scene). TT 54: immediately underneath register, PM I, 1,105 (5, IV). TT

217: immediate upper register, PM I, 1, 316 (5, II) and right side in the same register (Davies, *Two Ramesside Tombs*, pl. 30).

⁵⁶ G. Husson and D. Valbelle, *Instituciones de Egipto* (Madrid, 1998), 99.

both king and queen with lifelike appearance.⁵⁷ Kozloff⁵⁸ considers this tomb's reliefs to belong to the style she identifies as the 'Ornate Style', characterized by a dynamic and graceful outline, complicated compositions and movement. In her opinion, 'It is also very possible that the master's hand (of Ornate Style) did not stop at Thebes. Innovations presently attributed to the Amarna period, such as the scene of toddlers on an adult lap, were demonstrably invented by our artist'.⁵⁹ However, Kozloff also emphasizes the lack of studies into the relationship between the Ornate Style master and relief sculpture and Amarna art.

Bryan⁶⁰ dates this tomb to the first years of the last decade of the reign of Amenhotep III and relates its style to that defined by Johnson⁶¹ as 'Phase II', a naturalistic development of Thutmoside design which Akhenaton concluded, although exaggeratedly.

The west wall of the transverse hall is devoted to Amenhotep III and Khaemhat's loyalty and efficiency, with the consequent award distinction. This wall illustrates some common iconographic themes of Amarna art, such as the king's significance, his reward to the tomb owner, and courtiers' submission expressed by means of bowing in the presence of the monarch. By contrast, the east wall displays Khaemhat's employment and religious fervour. He appears overseeing a harvest on the north side, while crop commerce is represented on the southern one. In both parts, large figures of the tomb owner make offerings to different gods.

Myśliwiec⁶² situates TT 57 in both his Type A and Type B of Amenhotep III's facial features, which means that two different workshops were working simultaneously in Khaemhat's burial place. He also points out how the nobles and the gods are represented with the same features as the king. But also in Khaemhat's tomb there may be another, different hand with rather distinctive qualities. In the transverse hall the whole west wall and the largest figures on the east wall possess, although somewhat severely, a sort of limpidness and delicate form to faces, clothing and wigs which can be related to Johnson's Phase II and Myśliwiec's Type B. These qualities are not present in the harvest and commerce scenes, which have small figures set in registers and arranged in more complicated compositions, connected to Kozloff's Ornate Style. In spite of this, these scenes were created following a new sense of freedom and, accordingly, they encapsulate a vivid and detailed depiction of daily life replete with anecdotes.

Within this facet, the most remarkable aspect in the representation of trading between Egyptians and Nubians is the illustration of oral communication. This is an unusual issue in New Kingdom Theban tombs,⁶³ but it is a frequent practice in later Amarna representations, even though without written texts. In Amarna private tombs there are several illustrations: Mahu (Number 9) exercising his office and bringing prisoners to the vizier,⁶⁴ Tutu (Number 8) with the officials and the crowd,⁶⁵ people behind Parennefer (Number 7) being rewarded,⁶⁶ or, the most remarkable, the sentries who explain how Ay (Number 25) and Tiyi 'have been made people of gold'.⁶⁷ Furthermore, comparing the disposition of both harvest and commerce scenes, the first one corresponds to the rigid traditional arrangement of registers while the latter is elaborated with a freer design, in

⁵⁷ C. Aldred, *Egyptian Art in the Days of the Pharaohs, 3100–320 BC* (London, 1980), 170.

⁵⁸ A. P. Kozloff, 'Theban Tomb Paintings from the Reign of Amenhotep III: Problems in Iconography and Chronology', in L. M. Berman (ed.), *The Art of Amenhotep III. Art Historical Analysis* (Cleveland, OH, 1987), 63–4.

⁵⁹ Kozloff, in Berman (ed.), *The Art of Amenhotep III*, 64.

⁶⁰ B. Bryan, 'Private Relief Sculpture Outside Thebes and Its Relationship to Theban Relief Sculpture', in Berman (ed.), *The Art of Amenhotep III*, 66.

⁶¹ W. R. Johnson, 'Images of Amenhotep III in Thebes: Styles and Intentions', in Berman (ed.), *The Art of Amenhotep III*, 33–4.

⁶² K. Myśliwiec, 'The Art of Amenhotep III: A Link in a Continuous Evolution', in Berman (ed.), *The Art of Amenhotep III*, 18, 20–1.

⁶³ On the lowest register of the east wall, north side, where officials are measuring the crop, there is another scene with a representation of oral communication: a man informs the scribes and one of them turns to Khaemhat and notifies the good news (see Wreszinski, *Atlas*, 189).

⁶⁴ Davies, *El Amarna IV*, pls. xxiv and xxvi.

⁶⁵ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, VI. *Tombs of Parennefer, Tutu, and Ay* (ASE 18; London, 1908), pl. xviii.

⁶⁶ Davies, *El Amarna VI*, pl. iv.

⁶⁷ Davies, *El Amarna VI*, 23, pl. xxx.

which two different-sized registers combine with three small ones on the top right, where an extended but secondary event is taking place. This spacial organization is close to some other instances used in Amarna private tombs, such as Meryra's reward⁶⁸ and the quay of Akhetaten in May's burial place (Number 14).⁶⁹

Setting together all these aspects—the Nubians' naturalistic depiction, expressive oral communication between secondary personages, the consideration of the fleet, display as a precedent to those scenes of Meryra and Penthu and a freedom of execution in the arrangement of registers—it may be possible that the market scene in TT 57 is related to an Amarna sense of artistic expression and represents a precedent of lively compositions of contemporary life that decorate temples and tombs during the reign of Akhenaton.

⁶⁸ Davies, *El Amarna I*, pl. xxv.

⁶⁹ N. de G. Davies, *The Rock Tombs of El Amarna*, V.

Tombs of May and Any (ASE 17; London, 1907), pl. v.